



April 2026 Newsletter



SHS mentor Soren and his buddy

Mentor

Since I've joined Athletes for Kids at the start of my junior year, I have benefited in many ways. Before I got into the program and got matched with my buddy, I had heard a little bit about the experience via two of my close friends who were already in AFK; they had told me how much fun they had and how much they had learned through the mentorship. These messages I heard from my friends sparked my enthusiasm for the program even more, but have barely grazed the surface of all the memories I have now made with my buddy.

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My friendship with my buddy started with me going over to his house for the first time, nervous about the first impression I would make. To better my chances, I loaded up my trunk with all the Nerf and water guns that I owned so we could play Nerf wars. To my odds, that was the perfect activity for our first hangout.

Over the many months of spending time with my buddy and getting to know him better, he has shown me what true friendship means. Knowing that at the end of a hard week I have someone to go hang out with, who won't judge me for anything, and that I can talk to about anything, whether that is school, work, Nerf guns, or literally any other random topic. I have also learned the art of patience, knowing that not everything I suggest we should do will receive a "yes." Or not always being there when he is in the best mood, realizing that I can't just give in to that mood, but I can be the person to pick him up out of it, thus allowing us to have a great time.

I am grateful for my friends and Athletes for Kids for providing me with this amazing opportunity, but I am even more grateful for my buddy. Through the positive changes he has made in my life, he has helped shape me to become a better friend and listener, and has taught me to be more accepting of everyone and who they are.

Mentee Parent

If I Could Make a Soren...

A Letter of Gratitude for Soren's Mentorship

If I could wave a magic wand, I would create someone just like Soren. He is a perfect fit for our child. This is our second and final year with Soren. Over that time, he has shown encouraging, steady, and consistent energy.

Soren has been such an amazing mentor for our son. He has the gift of being able to lean in and respond to our son's needs in the moment while offering feedback and pushing him just enough to help him grow. Soren has restored my confidence in youth today.

We all look forward to seeing him each Saturday, especially our son. Even on difficult days, it never seems to faze Soren. He is patient, kind, thoughtful, fun, and has the remarkable ability to spark adventures indoors and outdoors. Some of those adventures have included walks in the woods, trips to the park, mountain biking, skateboarding, Nerf gun battles, playing guitar and drums, listening to music, board games, cooking, and celebrating birthdays.

Soren works well with others, and we enjoy having him here more than I can express. It's been truly amazing and heartwarming to watch our son and Soren grow in their friendship. This positive energy Soren brings is being carried forward. I have seen our child mentoring younger kids the way Soren mentors him, and it has helped him to feel more confident in social interactions.

Soren has truly become part of our family. We are so incredibly grateful for the time and effort he has dedicated to our son. Because of Soren, he is more confident, engaged, and already passing that encouragement on to others. We know the sky is the limit for Soren, and we are going to miss him so much when he graduates.

Soren, the kindness, guidance, and energy you bring have left a mark on our family that will never be forgotten.

All in for Autism 5K Race

ALL IN FOR AUTISM



For 17 years, the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club (BBRC) has organized the **All in for Autism 5K Run/Walk** in support of **Athletes for Kids** and other organizations that benefit children with autism. If you would like to participate in this year's 5K run/walk on **Sunday, April 26th**, please use the link below to register for Team AFK. The BBRC has graciously provided a discount link for anyone who would like to walk or run as part of Team AFK. We can't wait to cheer on this year's racers, especially Team AFK!

[Click Here to Register!](#)

Senior Mentor Celebration 2026



Save the date:

Thursday, May 28th

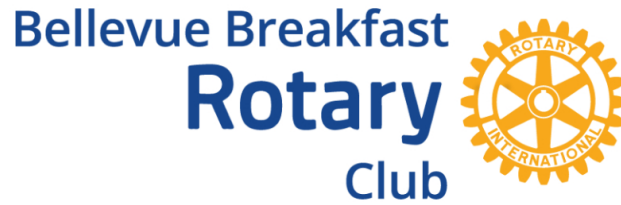
Senior Mentor Celebration

6:30 to 8:00 PM
Skyline High School



Celebrating the growth, dedication, and impact

With Gratitude



Thank you to the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club

This will be AFK Youth Mentoring's 7th year partnering with the BBRC to provide volunteers for their All in for Autism 5K. This race brings together people of all abilities in a positive way to raise funds for programs like ours. We want to thank the Bellevue Breakfast Rotary Club for their continued support of AFK, and can't wait for this year's race on Sunday, April 26th!

AFK Moments



It's been great to see how my buddy has changed over time, becoming a better person overall.

- AFK mentor



As we reflect on a month of memories, we look forward to more mentorship moments and embracing acceptance, friendship, and kindness every day.

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